

Message Text

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR

SUBJECT: UK MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE REPORTS TO COMMONS ON
JULY 19-20 COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING

REF: LONDON 10894 JULY 13

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE RT. HON. FRANCIS
PYM, M.P., IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS TODAY (JULY 23),
ASKING WHAT WERE THE RESULTS OF THE MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE MINISTERS ON JULY 19-20, THE RT.
HON. FREDERICK PEART, M.P., MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE,
FISHERIES AND FOOD, SAID:

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"THE MAJOR QUESTIONS DISCUSSED AT THIS COUNCIL MEETING

WERE THE PROPOSED ACTION PROGRAMME FOR RESTORING THE BALANCE IN THE MARKET FOR MILK AND MILK PRODUCTS, POSSIBLE INTERIM MEASURES FOR IMPROVING INTRA-COMMUNITY TRADE IN SHEEPMEAT AND THE EFFECT OF THE DROUGHT ON AGRICULTURE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

"MOST MEMBER STATES SET OUT THEIR VIEWS IN GENERAL TERMS ON THE PROPOSED MEASURES FOR MILK. THEY WILL BE FURTHER EXAMINED BY THE COUNCIL, WITH A VIEW TO REACHING DECISIONS IN THE EARLY AUTUMN. I MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO RESTRAINT ON THE COMMON MILK PRICE, BUT WOULD BE READY TO CONSIDER MEASURES OF PRODUCER CO-RESPONSIBILITY SUBJECT TO A FIRM PRICES POLICY. AT THE SAME TIME I LEFT MY COLLEAGUES IN NO DOUBT THAT WE ARE TOTALLY OPPOSED TO THE SUGGESTED TAX ON VEGETABLE AND MARINE OILS AND FATS AS PART OF ANY PACKAGE OF MEASURES TO DEAL WITH COMMUNITY MILK SURPLUSES.

"ON SHEEP MEAT THERE WAS A DISCUSSION OF POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN INTRA-COMMUNITY TRADE, INCLUDING ACCESS TO THE FRENCH MARKET. ALTHOUGH THERE ARE POINTS ON WHICH OPINIONS DIFFER AND TO WHICH FURTHER CONSIDERATION MUST BE GIVEN, THE COUNCIL RECOGNIZED THAT A SUFFICIENT MEASURE OF AGREEMENT EXISTED TO ENABLE IT TO EXPRESS THE FIRM INTENTION OF REACHING DECISIONS ON INTERIM MEASURES FOR IMPROVING TRADE IN SHEEPMEAT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AT ITS SEPTEMBER MEETING.

"ON DROUGHT, CERTAIN TEMPORARY MEASURES TO ALLEVIATE FARMERS' DIFFICULTIES WERE EXTENDED. THE COUNCIL ALSO DECIDED TO INTRODUCE A COMPENSATORY AMOUNT ON CANNED PEELED TOMATOES, WHICH WILL BENEFIT UNITED KINGDOM CONSUMERS, AND AGREED TO TAKE DECISIONS BY DECEMBER ON MEASURES FOR IMPROVING THE COMMUNITY'S MARKET IN HOPS."

COMMENT: AS REPORTED IN REFTTEL, AGATT MET WITH SIR FREDERICK KEARNS, SECOND PERMANENT SECRETARY, MAFF, CONCERNING EC PROPOSAL TO TAX VEGETABLE FATS AND OILS. KEARNS STATED FLATLY THAT IF PROPOSAL CAME TO A RESOLUTION VOTE UK WOULD VETO. MINISTER PEART'S REMARKS ABOVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DO NOT GO THAT FAR BUT REFLECT HMG POSITION AS "TOTALLY OPPOSED" TO PROPOSAL.

ARMSTRONG

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